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ABSTRACT

Critical thinking skills must be emphasized in schools if excellence in education is to be realized. The lesson plans in this learning module were designed with this issue in mind. The lessons focus on the concept of family as a universal institution. But family structures may vary due to specific cultural history, rapid technological advancement, religious beliefs, or economic and social requirements. It is felt that students can be made to think critically about such societal issues if they are presented with cultural situations. If students are made to understand that religious, environmental, and ecological factors differ from culture to culture and that these factors, in turn, influence the types of institution a culture develops for itself, then they may be able to critically analyze problems associated with institutional change in their own society and to understand the significance of structural alternatives. The lessons compare family structures in the United States and Nigeria and may take from six to eight class periods to complete. Strategies are suggested for presenting the lessons that focus on critical thinking skills. A short true/false test and a 12-item bibliography are included. (JB)

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COMPARISON OF FAMILY STRUCTURES IN AMERICA AND NIGERIA: LESSON PLANS ON CRITICAL THINKING

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I. TOPIC: COMPARISON OF FAMILY STRUCTURES IN AMERICA AND NIGERIA
LESSON PLANS ON CRITICAL THINKING

II. INTRODUCTION

Virginia is a leading state in the Union in that she has taken bold steps to come up with a blue-print in Excellence in Education-A Plan for Virginia's Future (October, 1986), and another in International Education-Cornerstone of Competition (November, 1986). The thirty-six reforms in education spelled out in Excellence in Education and the five major areas delineated by International Education are timely, indeed. But if our schools must produce the kind of students envisaged by the documents, then they must also emphasize the important place that the acquisition of critical thinking skills must occupy in our schools. Our lesson plan has been designed with this concern in mind.

Two recent sources on critical thinking provided important information for our lesson plan. These are Chet Meyers' work on Teaching Students to Think Critically (1986), and Robert J. Sternberg's "Critical Thinking: Its Nature, Measurement, and Improvement," in F.R. Link (ed), Essays on the Intellect (1985).

Over the years, critical thinking has been defined from the point of view of logic or problem-solving skills. From the perspective of logic, critical thinking has mainly emphasized Aristotellian logic, employing its diverse forms of argument, syllogisms, and propositional reasoning. On the other hand, the problem-solving approach has often combined "the teaching of basic logical operations--with a process of problem-solving derived from the methodology of the physical sciences" which "typically includes--- (1) recognizing and defining the problem,

(2) gathering information, (3) forming tentative conclusions, (4) testing conclusions, and (5) evaluating and making decisions" (Meyers, 1986:3-4). A third approach is identified by Sternberg as the psychological tradition. This tradition explains how individual students' personalities, different tasks, and diverse situations can combine to limit the particular type of characterization that goes with critical thinking. For example, a variant of the theory is interested in comparing the critical thinking of gifted children and normal ones. A fourth tradition is the educational one which draws on "classroom observation, text analysis, and process analysis of thinking in the classroom" to help students to understand the processes of critical thinking.

While all the four traditions stated above may be singly used meaningfully to elicit critical thought processes in students under specific conditions, we feel that our work will be richer if we eclectically use all four traditions in our lesson plan. This means that we are content to experiment with processes and strategies that solicit critical thinking in students as they perform tasks that are internal as well as external to them. We were, therefore, naturally drawn to Joan Gubbins' (in Sternberg, 1985) comprehensive critical thinking taxonomies or matrix of thinking skills, as can be found in Fig. 1 on the next page.

Using Gubbins' matrix of thinking skills, we feel a teacher will be provided the flexibility and the scope to draw students out on as many levels of critical thinking as possible. Students will also be able to be as divergent and convergent as possible. To get this kind of flexibility in critical thinking, we believe that a teacher must

Figure 1: Gubbins' Matrix of Thinking Skills

I. Problem Solving

- A. Identifying general problem
- B. Clarifying problem
- C. Formulating hypotheses
- D. Formulating appropriate questions
- E. Generating related ideas
- F. Formulating alternative solutions
- G. Choosing best solution
- H. Applying the solution
- I. Drawing conclusions

II. Decision Making

- A. Stating desired goal/condition
- B. Stating obstacles to goal/condition
- C. Identifying alternatives
- D. Examining alternatives
- E. Ranking alternatives
- F. Choosing best alternative
- G. Evaluating actions

III. A. Inductive Thinking Skills

1. Determining cause and effect
2. Analyzing open ended problems
3. Reasoning by analogy
4. Making inferences
5. Determining relevant information
6. Recognizing relationships
7. Solving insight problems

B. Deductive Thinking Skills

1. Using logic
2. Spotting contradictory statements
3. Analyzing syllogisms
4. Solving spatial problems

IV. Divergent Thinking Skills

- A. Listing attributes of objects/situations
- B. Generating multiple ideas (fluency)
- C. Generating different ideas (flexibility)
- D. Generating unique ideas (originality)
- E. Generating detailed ideas (elaboration)
- F. Synthesizing information

V. Evaluative Thinking Skills

- A. Distinguishing between facts and opinions
- B. Judging credibility of a source
- C. Observing and judging observation reports
- D. Identifying central issues/problems
- E. Recognizing underlying assumptions
- F. Detecting bias, stereotypes, cliches
- G. Recognizing loaded language
- H. Evaluating hypotheses
- I. Classifying data
- J. Predicting consequences
- K. Demonstrating sequential synthesis of information
- L. Planning alternative strategies
- M. Recognizing inconsistencies in information
- N. Identifying stated and unstated reasons
- O. Comparing similarities/differences
- P. Evaluating argument

VI. Philosophy and Reasoning

- A. Using dialogical/dialectical approaches

first let students see the family as a primary social institution in all societies. They must be told that the primacy of the family means the family is the first human institution in all cultures. The family's importance for the survival of generations of people is, therefore, universal. But this universal nature of the family as a social institution does not transfer to the type of family form or structure that different societies practice in different cultures. Factors, such as the rate of social change, social conditions and religious beliefs determine the type of family structure a culture may practice. For example, Islamic cultures believe that a family may consist of one man and not more than four wives at a time. Also, in some agricultural societies, cultural norms may encourage men to marry more than one wife, or women to marry more than one husband. But in Christian societies the traditional pattern is that of one wife and one husband at a time. Yet many variations of those forms exist today in highly industrialized or space-age cultures. We have heard, for instance, about the single parent, and/or surrogate parents in American culture.

It can be deduced from the statements made above that the different forms of family structures may be due to rapid advancement in technological innovations, religious beliefs and economic or social requirements. We believe that students can be made to think critically about developments such as these in society if they are presented with cultural situations, such as the patterns of family structure mentioned above. If students are made to understand that religious, environmental and ecological factors differ from culture to culture, and that these factors, in turn, influence the kind of type of institution a culture may develop for itself, then they may be able to critically analyze

problems that may be associated with institutional change in their own society and understand the significance of structural alternatives; that is, the way in which differenct social structures may be used to carry out the functions of social institutions whose traditional functions may be changing rapidly. We feel that this is the important purpose that a lesson on comparing family structures in America and Nigeria may serve.

Now, throughout this lesson plan, we have purposely refrained from expressions, such as "teaching students to think critically," because we wholeheartedly agree with Professor Sternberg (1987: 456-459) that critical thinking can never be taught. Instead, teachers are expected "to serve not strictly as teachers, but as facilitators" (Sternberg, 1987:459) (Emphasis our own). Also, because of this pedagogic stance, we suggest that the lessons leading to the simulation may be evaluated and graded to measure accuracy in internalizing, recognizing and applying the sociological and anthropological concepts involved. A list of questions have been suggested for such an evaluation exercise. However, we do not believe that the simulation exercise, itself, can be graded as "correct" or "incorrect." A facilitator can only think of solutions provided to problems as plausible, reasonable, or hard to achieve solutions.

III. GENERALIZATION

The family is a universal institution. But family structures may vary due to specific cultural history, needs and institutional problems due to social change.

IV. OBJECTIVES

1. Students will be able to deduce reasons for changes occurring in today's American family.

2. Students will be able to deduce reasons for changes occurring in today's Nigerian family.
3. Students will be able to compare the structure of the American family with the Nigerian one.
4. Students will explain the roles that family members play in both the American family and its Nigerian counterpart.
5. Given a situation and a set of problems students will be able to construct a family structure, defining roles for members, in an imaginary or hypothetical society.

V. KEY VOCABULARY

- Family
- Social change
- Roles
- Culture
- Cultural universal
- Cultural relativity
- Social Institution
- Social/cultural actors
- Social/cultural leaders
- Polygamy
- Polygyny
- Polyandry
- Monogamy
- Social structure
- Structural Alternatives

VI. MATERIALS

Materials needed will be a map of the continents of the world, a ½ inch video entitled "Family Life in Nigeria," VCR and screen and the content materials provided below

VII. SUGGESTED TIME

The time for this unit may vary from six to eight class periods.

VIII. CONTENT MATERIALS

1. THE NATURE OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY

(Adapted from Wallace and Wallace: Sociology; Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1985)

The family in America is changing rapidly, and it bears little resemblance to the form it took when the nation was founded. Scholars agree that the family has changed largely because the economy has changed from agrarian to industrial to post-industrial. Now let us see how America's changing economic system has influenced the structure and function of the family.

As our society has become more advanced in its technology, the family has changed form and given up many of its earlier functions to other institutions; that is, structural alternatives emerged. One hundred and fifty years ago the United States was a predominantly agrarian society, and the American family was a virtually self-sufficient institution, producing much of its own food, housing, and clothing. Industrialization moved production off the farm, away from the family, and into the factory. The family began to share the function of being a unit of economic production with increasingly large commercial firms.

Industrialization brought factory-style production and factory-style education in the form of mandatory mass education. Again, the family lost functions. Before industrialization the family was the major agent of career socialization. In the mid-nineteenth century, most Americans learned their working skills from their parents or as apprentices in other families' businesses. One learned farming from farmers, blacksmithing from blacksmiths, and milling from mill operators. A high school or college education as a means of acquiring job

skills was very unusual. Now the function of providing career socialization has now been almost entirely adopted by formal education in schools and on-the-job training programs in industrialized settings.

When fathers left for the factory and children went to school, the family surrendered much of its function as an agent of social control. In agrarian times social control depended almost entirely upon the family, with the father having nearly total power over, and responsibility for, other members of the household. Under industrialization the father was gone most of the day, and with children in school for much of the day, social control became a function of schools and mothers. With industrialization the state introduced public police forces to help serve a social control function which has been largely handled by the adult males of the community for the first century of United States history.

Schools also took over much of the family's earlier role in conferring status and providing cultural socialization. One's status began to depend on how far one had gone in school, and this continues into the present.

When most Americans were involved in farming, children were an economic asset, because they could contribute to the family's economic productivity. When the nation industrialized and passed laws prohibiting child labor, children became primarily consumers rather than producers. Economically, they take on the nature of a liability rather than an asset. Therefore, with industrialization usually comes a decline in family size. In less than a century, the average population per household in the United States dropped from 4.9 in 1890 to 3.7 in 1940 and on to 2.7 in 1981.

In the years following World War II, the United States began to move into the post-industrial era. This brought about further loss of functions once filled by the family. Women began to enter the full-time work force, and families increasingly relied on other institutions to do what mothers had previously done. Children started attending schools at a younger age and went to school for more years. Schools therefore continued to increase in importance as agents of social control and cultural socialization. Family size continued to decline. New institutions arose to care for older family members in their years of dependency. Members of the family who once would have lived out their less active years with grown children increasingly cared for themselves or were placed in nursing homes. Post-industrial society was accompanied by the rapid growth and development of new social structures such as pensions, Social Security, retirement communities, and nursing homes.

The post-industrial family has also increasingly surrendered its role as producer of the goods and services it consumes. Commercial firms now accomplish much of what the family once did for itself. Contractors like lawn services or cleaning firms do more and more household chores which were traditionally the domain of the family. The traditional gathering for a family meal has been frequently replaced by eating out sometimes separately, as when Dad catches breakfast at McDonald's. A convenience food industry has grown to reduce food preparation chores at home.

Even in its leisure hours, the family relies increasingly on outside sources for entertainment. After dinner conversations, games, and music making have been replaced by radio, television, videogames, and

movies. The sandlot ballgame once played with siblings and neighbors has been largely replaced by the mini-bureaucracy of Little League baseball and Pee Wee football. Age restrictions prevent other family members from joining in, except as members of the audience or as chauffeurs for the carpool.

Functionally speaking, the family seems to be continuously shrinking. Will the time come when everything the family has done will be businesses, schools and governments instead?

Not quite yet. What seems to be evolving in the American family today is its ability to adapt to the challenges of the post-industrial society.

2. ALTERNATIVES TO THE NUCLEAR FAMILY

(Adapted from Conklin, Sociology: N.Y.: Macmillan, 1984)

Not only do relatively few Americans actually live in a nuclear family consisting of a working father, a stay-at-home mother, and young children, but the proportion of Americans living in this situation has also declined over the years. More mothers are working; the birth rate has declined; life expectancy has increased; divorce is more common; and the illegitimacy rate has risen. As a result, there is now a greater diversity of living arrangements and family structures than there was even a few years ago.

Between 1970 and 1981 there was a 75 per cent increase in households with only one person, a much faster rate of increase than was true of the total number of households in the country. This change is a result of people getting married later than they once did, living alone for several years after they finish their education and before they marry, or even choosing not to marry at all. In addition, in-

creased gay rights activism in recent years may have made it easier for people to accept their homo-sexuality. In the past, some homosexuals married heterosexual partners to demonstrate their "respectability" to the world, and this could be less common today.

Cohabitation is a situation in which people who define themselves as a couple live together but do not marry. In 1970 there were about 500,000 households consisting of two unmarried people of the opposite sex, and by 1981 this figure had more than tripled. Still, only 2 or 3 per cent of all households are of this variety. A study using 1975 data found that somewhat more than half of the people in these living arrangements had been married previously. In 1981, nearly two-thirds of these cohabiting couples included a man and a woman who were both under the age of thirty-five. In addition to households of members of the opposite sex who live together while unmarried, there are also an undetermined number of homosexual couples who live together.

Some people see cohabitation as an alternative to marriage, and others see it as a "trial marriage." Living together can be the final stage in the selection of a mate, a time when a couple "tries on" the role of marital partner. However, there is no evidence that cohabitation necessarily makes people more satisfied when they do marry or that it reduces the chance that they will divorce later.

Cohabitating couples rarely have children without marrying first. Most states do not have laws to govern cohabitation, and this creates confusion and anger when these couples end their relationships. Without a marriage contract, the law does not provide for the division of property, alimony payments, or a formal end to the relationship. California does permit a division of community property for cohabiting

couples, and some states recognize a "common-law-marriage" of couples who have lived together for a specified length of time without getting married. Also, there have been a few well-publicized "palimony" cases in which one person has sued someone with whom he or she lived in an attempt to secure property that might have been received in a divorce settlement if they had been married.

Another alternative to the traditional nuclear family is to marry and have no children. Whereas some married couples simply delay the birth of children, others do remain childless. The number of married couples today who will remain childless is uncertain, because even the spoken intention to do so does not guarantee that minds will not be changed or birth-control measures prove ineffective. However, some sociologists speculate that if current trends continue, as many as 25 to 30 percent of women might remain childless.

One study found that about a third of couples who remained childless had decided to do so before they were married; the rest repeatedly postponed the birth of children until they felt it was too late or not desirable. Couples often see economic or social advantages to remaining childless. Childlessness is less expensive; and it enables couples to travel, see their friends, and go out in the evenings.

Childless married couples tend to live in large metropolitan areas, where both spouses work and have access to the cultural and social resources of the city. Because they commonly have two incomes and no children to support, these couples are often of relatively high social status.

Between 1970 and 1981, the number of one-parent families in the United States doubled. A major reason for this was the rising rate of

divorce; the death of a spouse is another source of single-parent families, but this factor has not been responsible for the increase in such families in recent years.

Another major reason for the increase in one-parent families is a rise in the rate of illegitimacy. During the 1970s, premarital intercourse gradually became more socially acceptable. Although abortion became legally available in 1973, by 1978 attitudes toward abortion had become more conservative. These and other factors have produced increased numbers of births out of wedlock in recent years.

The single-parent family is often a transitional stage, both for unwed mothers and for divorced parents. Because some mothers of illegitimate children later marry and because most divorced parents remarry within a few years, many single-parent families last for only a short time. Nevertheless, this kind of family has been on the rise in recent years.

Communal living is also an alternative family pattern. A commune is a household that includes at least three adults and can also include children. In a sense, communes are self-defined. Three roomates will not necessarily call themselves a commune, but three other people who are living together might choose to define themselves in this way. For young people in the late 1960s and early 1970s, communes were an alternative to marriage and the traditional nuclear family. Members pooled their resources and divided household tasks among themselves. However, as time went on, most of these communes dissolved because of internal tensions about the proper allocation of work or the sharing of resources --or because members left to form nuclear families.

3. THE NATURE OF THE NIGERIAN FAMILY

(Adapted from Glazier: Life of the Egba Yoruba; Abt Associates Inc., 1973)

There are three types of family structures in Nigeria: the indigenous, the Islamic, and the Christian. Indigenous families consist of more than one wife. Islamic families may not go beyond four wives at a time, and Christian families must consist of only one wife and one husband at a time. The description of family life which follows is of an indigenous family structure among the Egba people of Nigeria.

Whether an Egba family lives in a small village, a town or the city of Abeokuta itself, the life of the family centers around a compound, which may be as many as four separate houses around a courtyard. There are from four to forty people living in close contact with one another. The Yoruba follow family names in the male line, as we do. But more than that, a grown son and his wife or wives and children usually live in the compound of the man's father.

Since each adult man may have more than one wife, each wife and her children usually live in a separate room. The wives take turns each day cooking for their husband in the courtyard, where other wives are busy preparing the meals for themselves and their children. Each wife eats with her children in their room. All of the children play together in the courtyard. If one wife wants to go to the farm or to market, she does not have to look far for a baby-sitter.

Children are so important that a woman really begins to worry if she does not become pregnant in the first year of marriage, as this may be grounds for her husband's divorcing her. If she remains childless, she may become so depressed that she will run away or even commit

suicide.

No man or woman feels successful in life without having as many children as possible. Since many babies die at birth or shortly after birth, a man wants to have more than one wife just to make sure he will have a number of children to remember him after he is gone. Usually the different wives get along well; the first wife acts as "boss" of her husband's large family. Sometines an older wife becomes jealous of a younger prettier wife. If there is an argument or a fight, the man will be called in to settle it. If one wife cannot get along with any of the others, her husband may simply divorce her. In cases of divorce, the children, unless they are very young will stay with their father, while the woman will return to her parents' compound.

Arguments and disputes within a compound, if they cannot be settled by the man of the family, are settled by the oldest man in the compound who is called the bale (bash'-lay). Often a compound consists of an old man (the bale), his wives, his young children, and his sons and their wives and children. A wife always goes to live with her husband's family, so the old man's married daughters would live elsewhere.

Everyone in the compound gets up fairly early in the morning. One child may walk around the courtyard ringing a bell to get everyone out of bed. A rooster's crowing probably woke him up. Most mornings, each woman and her children have a hot breakfast together. This may be leftovers from the previous night's dinner.

The man in the family, unless they are too old to work, go off to the family farm not far away. Depending on the season of the year, they will clear the ground, plant, hoe, or harvest. The boys too young to work in the field feed the chickens and goats which live in the court-

yard. Then they may play until lunch time. In Abeokuta and in larger towns nowadays, some of the children will go off for the day to school. More often, however, schools are so far away that the students live at school most of the time. These are called boarding schools. The men usually take their lunches with them to the fields, in covered bowls or wrapped in clean leaves. Each woman fixes lunch for herself and her children and they eat together.

Each wife in the compound is busy during the day keeping her rooms clean, washing clothes, and looking after her children. On market day, one or more of the women will want to go to market either to buy things or to make a little extra money by trading and selling. Women of different compounds, especially relatives, may visit back and forth, taking their children with them or leaving them in the care of fellow wives. Everyone may take a nap indoors during the hot afternoon.

The men return from the fields in the afternoon, and the women begin to prepare supper. The wife who is cooking for her husband that day will fix something special. The men may eat together about the time it becomes dark, but they never eat with the women and children, who eat in separate groups in their rooms. After dinner, the children might listen to stories from their grandparents while the men talk or entertain visitors in the living room, and the women begin preparing the next day's food. Since everyone is getting up early the next day, they will go to bed early in their different rooms.

It used to be that all Yoruba children were born into a hole in the ground which the mother had dug and lined with clean leaves, while an old woman helped the mother. But today, Yoruba children are born at home with the help of a midwife, or in the hospital with the help

of a baby doctor. Because of the tropical climate and its diseases, the lack of protein in the diet, and the lack of sanitation, many babies, in the past died young. When a baby died at birth or soon afterwards, a Yoruba mother thought that its spirit would soon try again to get into the world. A baby might also be the reborn spirit of a dead relative, perhaps its grandfather or grandmother.

Within a week the new child who lived would be given a name; the mother might wait at least two days to see if it would live. The name might be the day of the week on which it was born, or the name of a dead relative. For the first few months the baby would nurse at its mother's breast. Wherever the mother went, she would carry the baby on her hip or her back, tied around with a piece of cloth, for everyone to admire. When the baby began to eat, he would be given soft, mild foods like pounded yam or goat's milk cheese.

As soon as the baby began to talk and walk, he joined the other children of the compound at play. Later on he would have a few household chores, or fetching some firewood for his mother to use in cooking. In the days before there were schools, a child learned all he needed to know by helping his father in the fields or her mother at home. Children learned about laws, customs, religion, and history from the stories told old people.

When a boy was about to become a man, his father might show him the part of the family farm which was his to use. A girl's mother would be teaching her how to cook and to be a good housewife. The girl might also be started out in trading in the market.

People usually married in their teens. The boy would find a friendly old woman to go to the girl's family with his proposal. If the girl's parents seemed agreeable to the match, and if they had not

already arranged for the girl to marry someone else, the boy and his family would send presents of many gourds of palm wine or a case of gin and sixteen kolanuts to the girl's father and the same to her mother. If the parents accepted these gifts, the couple was engaged.

If the engagement lasted quite a while, perhaps if the couple were too young to get married right away, the boy sent the girl's family each year a present of nine yams and one hundred ears of corn. The two fathers would get together and discuss the bride-price. The bride-price, although it was often paid in cash, was more like a deposit to make sure that the marriage held together rather than a matter of actually "buying" the bride. If the couple's marriage should end in divorce, the wife's family had to refund the bride-price.

When it came time to set a date for the wedding the Ifa (Ee-faah) oracle was consulted to find out a good way for it. There was a little ceremony, once the date was set, at which kolanut was split and chewed, making this a legal contract. On the day of the wedding, the bride and a group of her friends went to the groom's compound, where the bride's feet were washed. The bride was officially introduced to her new-in-laws and gave a little speech of greetings from her parents to them. The groom's mother gave the new bride a present of a set of fancy clothes to show that she approved of the marriage. Everyone, including the newly married couple, went off to bed.

The next day, the bride's parents sent all her clothes and belongings over to her new home. The bride soon learned that she could call her in-laws only by pet names, never by their formal names. Her mother-in-law helped the young bride set up the couple's household within the compound. The couple were warned that married people who committed

adultery would be publicly whipped. The couple began to settle into a routine of farming and housework, hoping all the while that they would soon be blessed with a baby. Later, maybe in several years, if the young man was a good and successful farmer, he might take additional wives in much the same way.

4. THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF THE NIGERIAN FAMILY
(Adapted from Henshaw, Elizabeth U. "Women in African Societies: An Emphasis on Family Roles" Journal of Ethnic Studies. 1/1:8-16, Hampton University, 1986.)

The advent of colonialism, with its associated Western civilization, has transformed social, economic and political life in African societies. The traditional African family system which was the mainstay of the society was severely affected by the changes. Men had to leave their wives, children and other dependents to look for jobs in urban areas. Women were thus left to carry the brunt not only of providing for the livelihood of their families, sometimes under extreme poverty conditions, but also of undertaking hard physical jobs which men used to perform. Women also had to assume temporary headship of households, a task which was contrary to the patriarchal family system in Africa.

New perception of present-day African women of themselves has brought changes in African family life. As a result of Western civilization, modern technology and development of industries are fast replacing the agrarian and traditional African societies. More and more women are receiving Western education and imbibing Western cultures. Many African families are no longer the "cubicles" they used to be. The new African societies are continually being influenced by happenings around the world. Consequently, global changes, such as women's

education and women's liberation movements, have brought about changes in the traditional roles of African women. Some of these changes are: (1) from the traditional mother's role as the first teacher of the child to a passive participator in her children's upbringing; (2) from traditional occupations and cottage industries to occupations which not only affect children's upbringing, but bring women into status conflicts with men; and (3) from the extended family system to the nuclear family unit.

The effect of maternal employment on the children, especially on the proper upbringing of the children, is an important issue in many African societies. Career mothers are generally blamed for moral decadence, increases in juvenile delinquency, violence and crimes among youth and broken marriages. Working-class women are looked upon with prejudice as being too assertive and greedy to make satisfactory wives. Those women who hold high positions in economic, social and political sectors are considered either to be exceptional creations of providence (that is if they found favor in their societies), to have very supportive husbands or god-fathers, or to have gained employment positions at the expense of their modesty. Apparently, such criticisms are based on the economic and social threats which career women pose to the men. Most men feel that the economic and social independence of women erodes family ties and weakens their traditional control over females. Contrary to the existing prejudice against active participation of women in the social and economic sectors of African societies, studies have shown that such women not only continue to bear their responsibilities, but help to improve the standard of living in their families, give better educational opportunities to their children, help to bridge

socio-economic class differences in their societies and increase the overall awareness of the family unit, thereby promoting progress in their societies....

The modern nuclear family system is completely alien to African tradition, but it is fast gaining ground because of the importance of wage employment in the present day African society. Many educated African men share household responsibilities with their wives who are in the labor force. . . .

The main problem facing African working mothers today is how to provide adequate maternal attention during the early years of their children's development without jeopardizing their employment. . . . In some regions, if a mother cannot care for or support a child, the child is placed with relatives in a rural area, this practice is no longer as common as it once was. In Nigeria, for instance, urban women often do not want their children to be socialized in a village environment.

City life does not favor the traditional extended family pattern of the Africans, especially in the provision of the child care that was not previously the sole responsibility of the parents. In contemporary African society, parents living in cities often resent strange neighbors when the neighbors correct or reprimand their children for misbehavior. Most families live in apartment buildings where children have very little space to play. In some locations they are kept indoors most of the time because of the growing crime rate in the cities . . . .

The extended family system and the communal effort for development are being replaced by the concept of the nuclear family. People are be-

coming independent and indifferent to one another with a corresponding drop in group consciousness. In most African cultures the average African of, say, thirty years of age has derived considerable benefit from the extended family system, particularly in the field of education. It was often through the contributions from extended family members that opportunities for higher education were created. The semon "be your brother's keeper" does not seem to impress modern Africans. Consequently the matrix on which to weave national development in most African societies, particularly now that material and financial resources are scarce, is being progressively weakened.

The transition from a traditional African family system to a modern Western system apparently does open tremendous opportunities for women to gain social, economic and political rights in their societies. However, something has to be done to preserve those cultural values in the African family system which gave cultural identity to the Africans. An increase in the amount of attention paid to the proper upbringing of the children and the maintenance of family cohesion are major issues which modern African women must deal with as they try to contribute to healthier and more progressive African societies.

IX. SUGGESTED STRATEGY

1. At the beginning of the class, refer to a map of the continents of the world. Point out to students the geographical relationships between America and Nigeria. Be sure to say that Nigeria is in West Africa on the continent of Africa, and that Africa is over three times larger than the United States. Let students understand that Nigeria is over 70%

agricultural, while the U.S. is only about 4% agricultural. Brief students on the current economic situation in Nigeria, as compared to that of the U.S.

2. In a second session teach the students the sociological and anthropological meanings of the key words listed under vocabulary.

3. In session three let the students view the video on "Family Life in Nigeria." Ask the students to describe, either orally or in writing what they saw in the video.

4. In the fourth session, share information provided under content materials. You may also request students in an earlier session to bring newspaper and/or magazine clippings on the American family to class to share; or let students read on the American and Nigerian family structures.

5. Engage students in critical analysis of the two family structures by asking them the following suggested questions:

    a. What is a family?
    b. Is the family the same in all cultures? Why or Why not?
    c. Can the structure of the family change with time across cultures?
    d. Why are there variations in the family structure across cultures?
    e. What role do economic factors play in determining how a family should function?
    f. What roles do children play in the American family?
    g. Are the roles that children play in the American family the same as the roles children play in the Nigerian family?
    h. What is the importance of the child in the Nigerian family? Is this importance the same for the American family? Why/How? Why not?
    i. How might the roles of children in the Nigerian family change, should their economy change from farming to industry and manufacturing?
    j. How might the importance of children in the family in Nigeria change, should their economy change from farm-

ing to industry and manufacturing?

6. To apply critical thinking skills and further understand the key concepts in this lesson, students may be involved in a simulation titled: CREATING FAMILY STRUCTURES: A SIMULATION. Prepare a game to involve cultural and societal leaders who are faced with the problem of resolving a cultural dilemma. One such dilemma may be: A hypothetical society that has one and a half times more marriageable men than women. The society has serious agricultural needs that must use only human labor because of the low level of technological growth. The society also seeks to control any possible social problems that may result from the society having excess marriageable men; for example, incessant bloody competition by the men for the scarce women. In addition the society wants to teach its inhabitants a sense of community, brotherly love, group identity, solidarity and cohesion. Let the group explore alternative ways of creating a practical family structure for the society. Reverse and expand the ratios, needs, factors and actors in another game.

X. SUGGESTED EVALUATION

Students should respond with True or False

1._____The family is not a universal social institution.
2._____Family structures are the same across cultures.
3._____People play gender related roles in the Nigerian family.
4._____Agricultural societies tend to emphasize gender related roles.
5._____The traditional roles that people play in the family in agricultural societies are not being affected by techno-

logical change in the American family.

6.____When social change occurs in a culture social institutions tend to change as well.

7.____Polygyny is a universal marriage system.

8.____Polygamy is a marriage system which allows a man to marry more than one wife.

9.____Monogamy is not preferred in American society.

10.____Social change is a factor that can affect the family structure in all societies.

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